Anarchy, Identity, and the Causes of the War in Ukraine

Part of IERES's European Politics Series

with

Prof. Keith Darden, American University

The war in Ukraine has been presented as a case of Russian aggression, ethnic separatism, and an escalating reaction to state violence. In contrast, the argument presented in this talk is that the war in Ukraine was the consequence of two conditions—the erosion of state authority and a stable set of historical—but not ethnic—cleavages in the polity. The complex interaction of these two conditions—one variable, one constant—raises issues about how we think about the causes of war more generally, and about the role of historical legacies in explaining isolated contemporary events.

Keith Darden is an Associate Professor in the School of International Service at American University specializing in comparative politics, international relations, and the politics of Eurasia. His first book, Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals: The Formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States, was published in 2009 by Cambridge University Press and won the 2010 Hewett award from ASEEES and an honorable mention for the Shulman prize. His second book, Resisting Occupation: Mass Literacy and the Creation of Durable National Loyalties, to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2015, explores how the national identities initially introduced to a community through schools account for subsequent patterns of voting, secession, and armed resistance to foreign occupation. His work has been published in World Politics, Ethnopolitics, Politics and Society, and Foreign Affairs.

Friday, January 30, 2015
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
Voesar Conference Room
1957 E St. NW, Suite 412
Please RSVP at http://go.gwu.edu/darden

This event is on the record.